

February 25, 2016

Dear Representative Fleischmann, Senator Slossberg and Education Committee Members,

I am writing regarding the Seal of Biliteracy in Bill 175 Section 2. It is important in today's interconnected world for high school students to be recognized for their achievement in learning to communicate well in two languages. I would like to raise one concern regarding how this section was written.

Although I support Bill 175, Section 2, I believe there should be one modification. The language that was put into the bill is not as clear as in the national version of the Seal of Biliteracy (see: <http://sealofbiliteracy.org/content/who-qualifies-seal-biliteracy>).

I am advocating for a return to the original language "evidence of achieving the designated level of language proficiency in English plus one or more other languages during their high school years". With this language, it is clear that both native English speakers who learn another language and English Language Learners (ELL) who master their home language and English would both qualify for this honor and this recognition of achievement that is the Seal of Biliteracy.

The current language says: " 'foreign language' means a world language other than English..." This would preclude an ELL from who masters English from counting it as his/her "foreign language". The Seal of Biliteracy is meant to encourage all students to achieve in at least two languages. Please retain the original language.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
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